



Rising to the Challenge is theme of annual St. Patrick's Day celebration in Downpatrick

Rugby and GAA leaders rise to the challenge of St Patrick's Day in Downpatrick

Bishop Harold Miller has invited parishioners from his diocese to join him at Down Cathedral for the annual St Patrick's Day Festival

Service followed by lunch in the marquee in the Cathedral grounds. The diocesan web site states:

This year's theme is 'Rising to the Challenge' with two keynote speakers, Mickey Harte, of the Gaelic Athletic Association, and Shane Logan, CEO of Ulster Rugby.

You are also welcome to attend the Holy Communion Service at Saul and to join the pilgrimage from Saul to Down Cathedral.

RSVP by email by 11 March to
info@downanddromore.org

9:15am Holy Communion at Saul
 Preacher: Rev. Adrian Dorrian
10:15am Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick
11:45am Festival Service in Down Cathedral
 With: Mickey Harte (Tyrone G.A.A)
 Shane Logan (Ulster Rugby)
 Wreath laying ceremony at St
Patrick's Grave
1:15pm Irish stew lunch in the marquee

Transport to Saul

From 8:00 am private buses will leave from the Mall for the communion service and pilgrimage. The last bus for the communion service leaves at 8:45 am.

The last bus for the pilgrimage leaves at 9:45 am.

The last bus from Saul to the Cathedral leaves at 10:40 am.

Greystones school raises €3,500 for Diocesan Refugee Housing Appeal

Fundraising for Dublin & Glendalough's Diocesan Refugee Housing Appeal continues and the pupils and staff of Temple Carrig School in Greystones have made a very generous contribution to the project. They have donated €3,500 to the project this week. The money came from the proceeds of their very successful school panto before Christmas which also raised funds for the Simon Community.

The diocesan appeal plans to raise €300,000 over three years to support a new housing project by the Irish Refugee Council with the Association of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland. The appeal will also fund programmes to assist those emerging from direct provision. Since the launch in November parishes, schools and organisations throughout the dioceses have been raising funds for the project.

Archbishop Michael Jackson wrote to all parishes and schools in the dioceses asking



A scene from Temple Carrig School's 2016 Panto.

them to be part of the solution to the housing crisis. He pointed out that by providing accommodation for refugees and those emerging from the direct provision system, pressure will be eased on the already strained organisations trying to tackle Ireland's homelessness crisis.

The IRC is Ireland's only national non-Governmental organisation specialising in working with refugees and people in the asylum process. In collaboration with the Association of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland, AMRI (formerly CORI and IMU), the IRC is in the process of acquiring several properties, both in Dublin and nationwide, that are being donated by the various AMRI congregations. These properties will require renovation and modernisation and this is where the money raised by the people of Dublin & Glendalough will be utilised. Funds will also be put towards programmes which will help those emerging from dependency on direct provision to become contributing and integrated members of their communities.

To contribute to the appeal monies can be forwarded by cheque to: the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, Church House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6 (marked Housing Appeal).

Donations can also be lodged directly to: Diocesan funds of Dublin and Glendalough, Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2, BIC: BOFIE2D, IBAN: IE50 BOFI 9000 1769 3548 78, Reference: Housing appeal. Donations may attract a tax rebate.

Drug trade a “callous trade in death”, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

The drug trade is a ruthless trade in ruining lives, a callous trade in death, the Archbishop of Dublin said at a service held annually to remember those who have died from substance misuse and related causes.

“It is a ruthless and cynical and diabolic trade which has no respect for any life. It thrives on destroying the lives of the weakest, whether of those who fall into abuse or those who they trap into becoming agents of their despicable trade.”

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was speaking at the 18th Service of Commemoration and Hope in the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sean McDermott Street on Wednesday 1 February.

While remembering those who have died from substance abuse, the multidenominational annual service also offers hope to families still struggling with addiction or in recovery.

Addressing these families, the Archbishop of Dublin spoke of his great enjoyment each year when he celebrates the Sacrament of



Service of Commemoration and Hope in the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Dublin

Confirmation in Sean McDermott Street Church. “At Confirmation you see young boys and girls at their best,” he said. “Their smiles portray how proud they are of themselves and of their families and of their school. It is wonderful to see real hope in their faces.”

Nothing made Archbishop Martin so sad and angry as “to see the hope of a young boy and girl robbed and be slowly destroyed through them falling victim to substance abuse. Their youthful smile becomes replaced by a despairing stare. Their hope is replaced by a tragic trap which despite all their efforts they find it harder and harder to break out of without a helping community.”

But he added, nothing touched his heart as much as “trying to imagine what it means to a young person to experience the freedom that comes with recovery, to be their true selves once again”.

He said “We are here to show any young person who becomes trapped in addiction that there still is hope as we let them know that there is a helping hand willing to pick them up – no matter how many times they fall – and help them along the difficult path to recovery.”

But the Archbishop of Dublin had a warning, from the words of Jesus, for those who ruin the lives of the young: “If anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

He told those present at the service that “Those who trade in death bring that condemnation on themselves rendering themselves despicable.”

He continued: “We gather to speak words of hope. We remember those who have died. They went through hard times but their loved ones remember them for the goodness that always remained there hidden within their troubled lives.

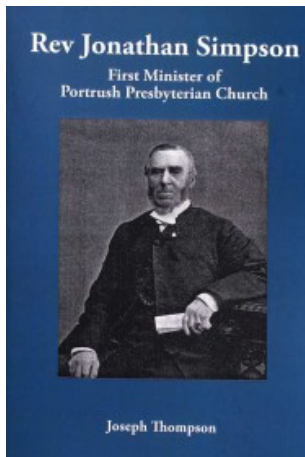
“We speak words of hope and support to the young people of this community who are our hope and we commit ourselves to carry them in our hearts and our helping hands that they can realise their hopes and go through life with those smiles of hope.”

The Annual Service of Commemoration of Hope was organised by the National Family Support Network in Dublin’s North Inner City. This self-help organisation supports family support groups and and raises awareness of the difficulties faced by families in coping with drug use while recognising their important role in supporting the recovery of the drug-using family member. It was established in 2000 following the first Service of Commemoration and Hope.

Its membership consists of representatives of family support groups, individual family members and those working directly with

families of drug users across the island of Ireland.

New book recalls life-saving Portrush Presbyterian minister



The Rev Jonathan Simpson served Portrush Presbyterian Church for well over 50 years as their first minister. When he came there was a very small congregation and no building. He visited America four times to raise money in order to provide an excellent suite of buildings, calling himself 'an Irish beggar' in the process. He was a strong evangelical who did all he could through his preaching, teaching and tract distribution to win souls to Christ.




As a very strong swimmer he personally rescued 12 people from drowning in the waters off Portrush and helped to rescue many more through his work with the Portrush lifeboat for many years. The work of the lifeboat service at Portrush was enhanced in 1995 by the D class inshore lifeboat 'Jonathan Simpson' named in memory of the Rev Simpson who was Honorary Secretary from 1864-94.

The Rev Simpson was a major figure in the Portrush community for nearly 60 years.

Whether you are interested in the history of Portrush Presbyterian Church or the history of

Portrush or of its lifeboat there there is a great story here.

Price £5.00 plus postage. [Buy it now online.](#)



Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland)

GLOBAL VISION 2017

4 services: stories of mission from South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syria and other

Sunday 12th February
Omagh Methodist Church (7:00 pm)
or
Roscrea Methodist Church (7:30 pm)

Saturday 18th February
Centenary, Leeson Park, **Dublin**
(11:00 to 12:30)

Sunday 19th February
Queen Street Methodist Church,

Methodist Church's Global Vision 2017

After 16 years The Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland) is discontinuing its annual Global Vision Conference but it will be launching something new in 2018.

In February there will be 4 services to give thanks for the past 16 years of Global Vision and to hear stories of mission from around the world. MMSI hopes you can come along to the service in your area!

- Omagh Methodist Church: Sunday 12th February at 7pm
- Roscrea Methodist Church: Sunday 12th February at 7:30pm
- Centenary Methodist Church, Leeson Park: Saturday 18th February, 11am-12:30pm
- Queen St. Methodist Church, Lurgan: Sunday 19th February at 7pm

Church of England launches new Foundation for Educational Leadership today

The Church of England is launching its Foundation for Educational Leadership on Saturday 4th February with a national conference.

The Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership will provide leadership development training for those holding key roles in education, and is a major intervention by the Church in the education sector.

In advance of the launch, it has announced the names of the four trustees of the new charity:

- Professor Joy Carter DL (Chair); Vice-Chancellor of Winchester University
- The Revd Nigel Genders; Chief Education Officer for the Church of England
- The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek; Bishop of Gloucester
- Professor Bill Lucas; Acclaimed researcher and writer about education and learning

Speaking about the new trustees the Foundation's Director, James Townsend, said: *"We are thrilled that the work of the Foundation for Educational Leadership will be supported by an experienced and visionary Board of Trustees, reflecting a powerful partnership between dioceses, universities and school leaders.*

"I am looking forward to working with Joy, Nigel, Bishop Rachel and Bill as we seek to ensure that all leaders in education have access to the very highest quality leadership development - especially those serving pupils in rural and disadvantaged areas."

The Chair of Trustees, Professor Joy Carter, said: "The next few years will be an important time for our education system as we equip a new generation of young people to shape the values and priorities of our society, and contribute

meaningfully to a complex and globalised world. "To do this, we need to ensure our leaders in schools, Multi-Academy Trusts and diocesan education teams are fully supported in their development. The Board is committed to ensuring the success of the Foundation for Educational Leadership in doing so."

Further trustees will be recruited to the Foundation in due course.

Inter-Church Credit Union to extend to Catholics in GB

A credit union first launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury and other church leaders is to expand to include eligible members of the Catholic Church in England and Wales and in Scotland.

Approval has been given by the regulators for the Catholic Church in England and Wales and in Scotland to become the latest Christian denomination to be included in the Common Bond of the Churches' Mutual Credit Union (CMCU).

The move boosts the potential membership of the CMCU by an estimated further 37,000 people from eligible groups such as Catholic

clergy and employees of the Catholic dioceses, including Catholic schools. The Credit Union will be rolling out membership throughout this year starting with the Diocese of Westminster.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "I am delighted that the Catholic Church in England and Wales and in Scotland is now under the Churches' Mutual Credit Union umbrella, this marks a huge step forward in our efforts to build a strong credit union sector in this country not just in the poorest areas but for everyone.

"I congratulate all those who have worked so hard to make the CMCU a success and I look forward to seeing it continue to grow in the future."

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, said: "I'm glad to become a member of CMCU. Their work today is very important as this is a financial institution that directly reflects our shared effort to give everyone the opportunity to manage financially and to make the best of their resources.

"This Credit Union echoes clearly important aspects of our Christian understanding of working together for the common good."

The CMCU was launched in February 2015 by Archbishop Justin and other church leaders with the Church of England, Church of Scotland, Methodist Church, Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Church in Wales as founder members. The United Reformed Church joined last year.

At its AGM held last Friday, the CMCU celebrated a year of growth with members approving the levels of dividend to be paid to all savers. The Credit Union, which started with an empty balance sheet, now has savings deposits of £2.5 million and a net loan book of more than £1.6 million. Ven Antony MacRow-Wood, CMCU president, said: 'I am delighted to be in the position to report such strong growth and pleased that the credit union is able to reflect this growth in both the rate of dividend payable on savings and the fact we are able to announce a further cut in our lending rates. We are a lender which can both compete in the lending market and offer a personal and ethical service.'

Christian Aid welcomes Theresa May's stance against Israeli settlement activity

Christian Aid has welcomed Theresa May's willingness to discuss spiraling settlement

activity with Benjamin Netanyahu, and highlight its role in undermining the faltering Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Mr. Netanyahu will meet the Prime Minister in Downing Street on Monday for talks that will include trade and the peace process.

The UK government has condemned the “growing trend” for further settlement units in the West Bank and supports UN resolutions declaring Israeli settlements “illegal”.

William Bell, Christian Aid’s Advocacy Officer for the Middle East said: “Growth in illegal settlements is at record levels so these talks are timely and of utmost importance. In the last two weeks, Israel has announced plans to build over 6,000 settler homes across the occupied West Bank and 2016 saw a record number of demolitions of Palestinian property.

“If the current trend continues, with its increasingly coercive environment against the Palestinian population, then the two-state solution will become nothing more than a political slogan rather than reality. Our experience, as an agency working closely with both Palestinians and Israelis, suggests that point is worryingly close.”

“Together with the imminent Regularization Bill this is effectively annexing Palestinian land to Israel, Mrs. May must strongly oppose such moves which will further hinder the peace process.”

“Settlements are only one aspect of this conflict, but they are indicative of an increasingly tense situation on the ground. If this goes unchallenged, it will continue to obstruct any hope of a peace process.

“Theresa May must seize this opportunity to press Prime Minister Netanyahu to heed international concern over increased settlement activity, to ensure accountability in working towards a just peace for both Israelis and Palestinians.”

After Trump phone call Australian bishop asks Prime Minister to permit entry of asylum seekers

Bishop Philip Huggins of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne has called on the Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to bring asylum seekers still languishing in offshore detention to Australia – following days of speculation surrounding a US resettlement deal which had

been struck with the Obama administration last year.

Australia has refused to accept the refugees – most of whom are men from Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq – and instead holds them in offshore detention centres on two Pacific islands.

Bishop Huggins' intervention comes after a phone call between President Trump and the Australian Prime Minister called the deal into question: "This matter has been wounding the soul of our nation for long enough. The people on Nauru and Manus are, like ourselves, made in the divine image and likeness," Bishop Huggins said in a statement. "The dignity of our nation requires nothing less than such an amnesty, as does the Prime Minister's own dignity."

Under the deal, up to 1250 asylum seekers would be resettled in the United States. However following the phone call with the Australian leader, Mr Trump later tweeted that he would "study this dumb deal".

Mr Turnbull has maintained that Mr Trump agreed to uphold the deal during their 25-minute phone conversation last weekend.

Large numbers of those still in detention come from some of the seven nationalities that Mr

Trump banned from entering the US for 90 days by executive order on 30 January. The executive order also suspends the US refugee program for 120 days.

News briefs

+++ New youth Mission Resource from MCI -

All In' has arrived - the new mission resource from the Methodist Church in Ireland is here and ready to be used! 'All In' is a 5-week mission resource for 11-18-year-olds that explores mission in the every day. Whether you want to use it in youth fellowship, small group, BB & GB, Scouts, or a Bible class, this resource is accessible for all young people. If you wish to receive a copy of the printed resource, please email leannehill@imycd.org. This project was created in partnership with [IMYC](#), [Methodist World Development & Relief](#) and Methodist Home Mission Ireland.

+++ Director sought for Scripture Union NI -

The General Director will head up the Scripture Union Movement in Northern Ireland. We are looking for a leader with wisdom, vision and a passion for Biblical Engagement with children and young people. Are you someone who could:

- Bring inspirational leadership to staff and volunteers?
- Develop and deliver effective strategy?
- Be passionate about helping children, young people and adults engage with the Bible?
- Understand the challenges of leading the movement given the church, educational and societal contexts of Northern Ireland?

Contact [Joanne Coulter](#) for a job description and application form. A copy of the [job description](#) is available online.

Closing date for receipt of all applications is **Thursday 9th February at 12 noon**. This post was previously advertised. All applicants should be in full agreement with the [Aims, Beliefs and Working Principles](#) of Scripture Union.